

April 1, 2011

Senator Eric Coleman, Co-Chair  
Representative Gerald M. Fox, Co-Chair  
Members of the Judiciary Committee

**Testimony Regarding Senate Bill No. 6634**

I have come today to give testimony to SB No. 6634. Allow me to begin by reminding us that the Juvenile Justice System was established in Connecticut to rebuild the lives of troubled youth. Therefore, whether a youth is placed in state or out-of-state, Catholic Charities recommends ensuring a minimum of 6 months and preferably 9 months be served in the community.

Children are “works in progress” that must be guided toward becoming productive adults. The educational and therapeutic treatment that begins in the residential setting needs to continue in the home and community. When youth are supported, and given the time to apply the healthy patterns of behavior they learned while in residential treatment, this reduces the likelihood of recidivism and risk to self and others. When youth are highly supervised and clearly understand that they must meet all the conditions of their parole or risk placement back in residential placement, they perform even better.

I request that you support the transition of youth back to their home community with treatment time left on their commitment. This action not only protects the community but develops and builds on the youth’s strengths. Please give the troubled youth in Connecticut the opportunity to become fully accountable and healthy adults. They deserve it.

Thank you for your consideration.

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